

## BEHIND THE SCREEN

"Close-Up" News and Views of Film-land and Its People.

George Eastman's National Academy of Motion Picture Art at Rochester the Latest and Greatest Project—Rothapfel and Brulator Are Associated With the Enterprise—Plan Includes an Ideal Theatre.

By Julian Johnson.

It seems as though the upstart and galloping movie were destined to beat the more dignified and certainly more sonorous drama as an endowed art and medium of cultural entertainment.

According to report, three gentlemen met for serious business as well as lunch at the Biltmore last Wednesday noon. Probably many times three gentlemen met for more or less serious business and lunch in the Biltmore last Wednesday noon, but the three whom our tale concerns have had much to do with the photoplay in divers ways. When these three had ended their session, it is declared that George Eastman's "National Academy of Motion Picture Art" at Rochester was a settled proposition and that definite and formal announcement to this effect will come about the 1st of August.

In passing let it be said that whatever the motion picture may eventually owe Mr. Eastman, he has been most lavishly treated by the motion picture for several years, for he manufactures at Rochester practically all of the positive as well as negative films. "Cast thy bread upon the waters," as it were.

The first public dream of the Rochester man was the establishment of a symphony orchestra. The dream expanded and became a symphony orchestra plus. While the details of his project are still nebulous,

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these are some of the propositions he will probably take up:

The establishment of a collegiate, experimental laboratory to aid the producers of photoplays in solving many of the present-day problems. Artificial lighting is rapidly replacing sunshine in everything except straight exterior work, and lighting is still far from being a perfected science. Light and the sensitive film, too, are far from satisfying each other's demands.

Continued study of the camera mechanism, with a view to the steady improvement of motion photography. The tinting and toning of film—those sections of a picture known as the "night shots," for example, still far from realistic.

Classes in the actual study of photoplay construction, which will endeavor to make of the scenario something more than a notebook of consecutive sets and shots for the director.

Mr. Eastman's public presentation thoughts are more fully matured, it is said, than his plans for a foundation for experiment and study—definitely matured, in fact. These are declared to include the establishment of an ideal—or as near ideal as possible—motion picture theatre, seating 3,700 people. Here photoplays, traveltogs, comedies, scenes, news-reels, educational and so on will be linked together in the best manner and order possible, in regular programme form.

The orchestra—the original symphony orchestra he had in mind—will be fully enjoyed here. One of the Eastman ideas is that music and the screen are inseparably linked, and this orchestra will, it is declared, be the world's greatest music-pictorial organization—a complete orchestra of 100 men, with a \$50,000 appropriation for the selection of a conductor, a concert-master and section leaders.

A lot of experimenting is to be done in the combination of dramatic pictures and music, not alone for the orchestra, such as only large cities can afford, but in the exact musical scoring of photoplays for the modest melodic combinations of the average theatre, and for the pipe-organ.

Samuel Rothapfel, former manager of the Rivoli and Rialto, will be the director of this theatre. He, Eastman and Julius Brulator were the Biltmore luncheoners.

And so their plans go, with much more detail than they care to give just now. In fact, they're not giving any details and only smile when asked about these particulars.

It seems as though Rochester were destined to become the Bayreuth of the photoplay.

For quite awhile you've been hearing about the Famous Players production of the famous "Fog of My Heart," with Wanda Hawley in the role created by Laurette Taylor.

The jinx that pursued all managerial dealings here this piece seems just now to have been broken. Mr. Eastman as it pursued Mr. Morosco. If you are a reader of theatrical gossip you'll remember that Mr. Eastman was always more or less unrolled with his production of "Fog of My Heart," and the sending out of road pegs to the great pain and embarrassment of Miss Taylor, and so on. Then came an apparently final court decision allowing Mr. Morosco to dispose of the highly

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## FAVORITES OF MOVING PICTURE FANS



MARY PICKFORD

WANDA HAWLEY.

disputed film rights—which disposal he promptly made to Mr. Zukor. Mr. Morosco, however, kept at it, and a few days ago threw shrieking dismay into both the Zukor and Morosco camps by Supreme Court permission to re-examine this case.

Now the status of the very fine and tremendously expensive Zukor production, practically completed, is higher in the air than Mt. Everest. Nobody, to speak in unconfident American, knows where he is "at." Certainly Mr. Morosco doesn't, until the case has been again judicially reviewed, but he hopes that he has recovered his rights, and if it proves that he has, there are certainly rocks ahead for the little play so carefully fabricated in Celluloid. It is said that he intended to Famous Players that it would be quite all right with him in any event could the play be remade, with Miss Taylor in the chief role. The throwing-away of the summer's most elaborate production would not be thought of, however, except as a last resort. Besides, hasn't Miss Taylor these many seasons stanchly refused all film entreaties, while looking with more or less derisive amusement upon the lowly picture?

There is unusual literary interest in an announcement from Mary Pickford's Great Headquarters. Following the completion of a picture upon which she is now engaged, Miss Pickford will do J. M. Barrie's "Hop o' My Thumb."

Though this is not the first time Mr. Barrie has entrusted himself to the cinema, it is the biggest recognition he has ever given it. He is one of the last old-time strongholds of writing conservatism, as far as the movies are concerned. I was present on one occasion when a certified check for \$50,000 was forwarded to him merely as a first payment for film rights to "Hop o' My Thumb." Astonishingly short time—or, I suppose, about as quick as the mails could bring it—back came that check with a not curt but certainly cool letter declining any participation in any cinematic adventure.

James R. Quirk, publisher of Photoplay Magazine, returned from England the other day as avowed evangel of discouragement for American film people who propose to make hot-foot shooting tours to England and the Continent, now that the war is at least formally over.

"We have been told, and we believe," said Mr. Quirk, addressing a group of film manufacturers one day this week, "that the American film industry in artistry are the best in the world. Let me tell you something else: America is the best place to make that photoplay. Don't run off to Europe to inferior conditions just for the sake of novelty. You are going to find less than three months a year of good exterior weather in England, and the same in France, unless you confine yourself to Nice, and that general vicinity. You can go to Italy, but if you do, you will run into a closed shop. Italian film industry and American capital are already working hand in hand there, and with the exception of certain American studios already founded and funded, and working co-operatively with the Italians, there is no place in the world for any one else to better conditions as we find them in America. With our artificers of architecture and our stupendously diversified scenery, we get in this country a simulation of every country and every place in the world. Griffith made a better Limehouse in California than I found in London—and I spent a day in the Limehouse district trying without success to pick out locations he might have used in screening Burke's story."

With the advent of the Bennett girls at the Broadway Theatre it is interesting to compare the efforts of the Pacific Coast comedy producer with the productions of Mr. Ziegfeld. Both these men beat all their rivals in the selection of young feminine loveliness. Both have, for a number of seasons, leaned more heavily upon beauty than laughter.

To those who go to see "Yankee Doodle in Berlin" at the Broadway Theatre, let us give the names of the four reigning queens of Bennett's frequently edited "Follies." Phyllis Haver, Marie Prevost, Virginia Warwick, Harriet Hammond. At least two or three of these young ladies are definitely promised, by name, to appear personally in the local production. If they are there you are going to see the leading ladies of comedy loveliness in motion pictures; if they are not there you may be seeing Bennett girls, but not the Bennett girls whose forms and faces are most generally known.

Personally, we wish we had nothing to do except write poems and paragraphs about the artless blond loveliness of Phyllis and the more sophisticated brunette beauty of Marie—but time passes, time presses, and we can only call attention to Bennett queens of the past: Mabel Normand, long a Goldenwyn star; Alice Lake, now an emotional actress at Metro; Gloria Swanson, for some months Cecil De Mille's exhibit A at Easky's, and the late queen of Sennett, the ex-school marm, Mary Thurman, who quit being the screen's front chicken to become a character actress.

There have been a number of Bennett desertions lately, chief among them Eddie Cline, the director responsible for barbaquing such ancient sentimentalities as "East Lynne."

Cline joined the Fox outfit at a salary alleged to be \$35,000 a year, and carried with him Chester Conklin. The two most famous sennetters of early days were Charlie Chaplin and Roscoe Arbuckle, often seen in small films together with Miss Normand. How much would it cost to assemble that cast on a single strip of gelatine today?

I am very much interested in hearing that Peggy Wood has definitely decided to go into pictures. She will join the Will Rogers-Goldwyn concern in Culver City. Miss Wood brought to "Masyn" not only feminine loveliness, but the charm of a beautiful voice and the ability of a real dramatic actress. She is keeping up her reputation by invading pictures from two sides at once—she will not only act, but is also making a study of scenario writing. Again—Miss Wood has written a stage play with Sam Merwin and this will be produced in New York in the fall.

Accelerate your pulses, young ladies—David Powell is about to become a star. He will return to the screen, after quite an absence, in "The Teeth of the Tiger," another Arsene Lupin story by Maurice Le Blanc. The piece is now being filmed at the Famous-Lasky studios. Mr. Powell has often played leading parts opposite the best known women of the screen, but this is his first featured appearance. He first came to general public attention in Beulah Marie Dix's play "Across the Border," produced in 1914 at the Princess Theatre.

Still the comedian aspires to Hamlet, and still the sheer bric-a-brac of the stage and screen longs to become an article of practical emotional utility. At that, this is no knock, but an honest applauding of the sensible ambitions of Harold Lloyd's ex-

quisite little leading lady, Bebe Daney. Bebe, who has now reached the age of eighteen, has forsaken the short socks and brief bathing suit route to fame; she has left the Robin studio, has set down her skirts, and will be one of five "leading women" in the DeMille production of "The Admirable Crichton." The others? Gloria Swanson, Little Lila Lee, "vampette" Julia Faye, and Mildred Redmond, another comedienne.



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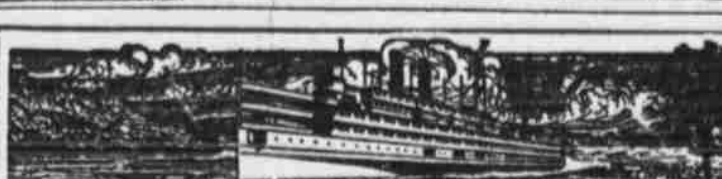
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